

### **The soils in which the seed falls**

Mark's Gospel is full of action. He includes little teaching of Jesus and far fewer parables than Matthew and Luke. This parable tells about the preaching of the Word; and it is true for the spreading the Word by any means.

The title of the parable in our translations is wrong. I would call it 'The parable of the types of soil'. The sower is not very successful due to the bad soils on which he sows his seed. This is in contrast with the fact that the Bible often points to the power of the Word: Isaiah 55, Hebrews 4:12-13.

We all know the experience: we conduct many services and organise many outreach activities, but what is the fruit? We miss our inactive members. We hear the argument: "God put the Sunday on the wrong day, there's so much else to do."

We should not too soon read the parable in an individualistic way. What Jesus says is true of God's calling people during the history of Israel, for his own ministry on earth, for later church history, and then also for our time. The Church in the West is not bearing much fruit anymore. But Jesus' own disciples were also slow to understand and quick to abandon him.

Yet today we consider what the parable means for us. Fruitlessness occurs among us. In Knaphill people have come to faith, believed, been baptised, withered, faded, left...

Real hearing is more than receiving sounds. Sometimes hours of sound are less effective than one sentence that hits you.

Isn't the sower careless? He throws his seed everywhere! God is generous – and so must we be. That is lesson number one for today. Sow the word whenever and wherever you can!

Which of the types of soil are you? What can you do to bear (more) fruit? Water and feed the plant! Learn how to remember the Sunday service on Monday morning, reflect on the content of the prayer meeting on Friday morning.

What kind of soil is Knaphill Baptist Church? How can we become more fruitful?

Verse 7 mentions the thorns which are squeezing the seed. The Word of Jesus is in competition with so much else for attention in our busy lives. Many are so busy! What a shame! Even if other things are good in themselves, they are thorns when they hinder our spiritual life. If you have no time even during lockdown, what are your priorities?! How will you bear fruit?

This parable has the potential to make us sad because of the lack of result, then and now.

But here are some comforting thoughts:

1. This also happened to God and to Jesus before us. There is no reason for self-pity.
2. The promise that the Word of God is powerful (Isaiah 55)
3. And there is the joy when people do bear fruit.

Are you bearing fruit?